

Tab 5 – Overview of the Needs Assessment in Texas

Introduction: After review of Area Epidemic Profiles, CPGs conduct a needs assessment of the plan area to further guide the development of an area HIV prevention plan. Needs assessment processes incorporate morbidity and risk data in both quantitative and qualitative formats to assist in the determination of a plan area's prevention priorities. The purpose of the needs assessment is to

- assist in identifying and further defining those populations most at-risk for HIV infection,
- assist in prioritization of HIV high-risk target populations and determine appropriate interventions for these high-risk populations, and
- assess existing community resources for HIV prevention through a resource (provider) inventory.

The steps in the needs assessment process for HIV/STD prevention planning include

- review the Area Epidemic Profile to identify and select subpopulations to assess;
- plan the needs assessment (including resources needed, timelines, collaborative efforts, tools, methodologies, sample sizes, etc.);
- conduct the needs assessment;
- analyze the results, and
- utilize the results in the priority-setting and intervention selection processes.

Persons at-risk for HIV infection and persons infected with HIV play a key role in identifying prevention interventions that are culturally appropriate for identified at-risk groups. In addition to participation in the needs assessment process by affected and infected individuals, the success of a needs assessment process is also determined by

- a clear definition of the subpopulation(s) to be assessed and the selection of appropriate methods for assessment of needs;
- an understanding of the purpose of data collection (ask *only* the key questions to help prioritize the population in question and help define or select interventions appropriate for those populations);
- collection of information using a wide variety of sources (questionnaires, key informant interviews, focus groups, and CPG expert panel discussion); and
- an accurate analysis and documentation of the information gathered.

It is important to remember that a needs assessment examines issues at a particular point in time, providing a snapshot of the HIV epidemic and resulting

needs in a given community. Due to changes in the epidemic and the identification of new trends, HIV prevention planning presents the unique challenge to continually reassess plan areas and assure that appropriate interventions are provided to those individuals at highest risk.

The Needs Assessment Process in Texas

In completing the steps in the needs assessment process outlined above, Texas faced some unique challenges in assessing statewide needs. Since the size and diversity of the state requires multiple planning groups, the approach was to balance the need for some degree of uniformity with the need for the six plan areas to tailor individual needs assessment processes to the respective communities. For uniformity, all six areas used the same needs assessment client survey instrument (in Appendix), which collected core data for each subpopulation surveyed. CPGs then utilized additional survey questions, focus groups and key informant interviews as needed to supplement data from the client surveys. Each Area Action Plan contains a description of the specific methods used in the individual plan area.

Format for reporting results of the needs assessment

All needs assessment results are reported on the *Needs Assessment Findings Forms* included in Tab 5 of each Area Action Plan. There are separate report forms for each subpopulation within each HMAZ or LMAZ. The report format includes *frequency* data and *key findings* for *risk behaviors*, *FIBs*, *testing history* and *need for testing*, *prevention services accessed*, and *prevention needs*.